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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/717,547	11/21/2003	Takehiko Makita	31869-198826	7976
26694	7590	05/05/2006	EXAMINER	
VENABLE LLP P.O. BOX 34385 WASHINGTON, DC 20045-9998			DEO, DUY VU NGUYEN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1765	
DATE MAILED: 05/05/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/717,547

Applicant(s)

MAKITA ET AL.

Examiner

DuyVu n. Deo

Art Unit

1765

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 February 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over admitted prior art and Moustaka (US 5,847,397).

Admitted prior art, pages 1-3 of the specification, describes a method for forming HEMTs comprising: removing part of GaN (second compound semiconductor) by dry etching to partially expose a surface of the AlGa_N. Unlike claimed invention, admitted prior art doesn't describe nitrogen plasma treatment step to recover damage due to nitrogen vacancies arising in the expose AlGa_N surface. Moustakas teaches a surface treatment method for a compound semiconductor comprising treating the surface with a non-etching nitrogen plasma to reduce the formation of nitrogen vacancies (claimed recover from the damage due to nitrogen vacancies arising in a surface of the compound semiconductor) (col. 5, line 39-48). It would have been obvious for one skilled in the art in light of Moustaka to treat the compound semiconductor with N₂ plasma because it reduces the formation of nitrogen vacancies (col. 5, line 39-48), which is a problem recognized by one skilled in the art at the time of the invention (page 3 of the specification).

Art Unit: 1765

Referring to claim 10, the conventional method for forming HEMTs further comprises: forming the AlGaN layer on a substrate and a GaN layer on the AlGaN layer; forming a first and second main electrode on the AlGaN layer; annealing the partially exposed AlGaN layer; and forming a gate electrode on the exposed AlGaN (page 2 of the specification).

Referring to claims 16-18, Moustaka doesn't describe the nitrogen plasma treatment temperature is less than 100 degree C; however, he shows the temperature can be treated at a big range 270-600 degree C (col. 5, line 37, 44-45). Therefore, in the absent of unexpected result, one skilled in the art would find it obvious to use the low temperature such as less claimed 100 degree C because it would save time and reduce cost (from heating the substrate) and as a result would increase the production yield.

3. Claims 2, 7, 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over admitted prior art and Moustaka as applied to claims 1, 5, 10 above, and further in view of Lee et al. (US 6,762,083).

Referring to claims 2, 7, 12, Moustakas doesn't describe a plasma treatment for the compound semiconductor using a ICP (claimed ICP RIE) (col. 2, line 39-45). It would have been obvious for one skilled in the art to any apparatus that are available and known in the art as shown here by Lee as long as it can provide plasma for the treatment process with a reasonable expectation of success.

4. Claims 4, 9, 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over admitted prior art and Moustaka as applied to claims 1, 5, 10 above, and further in view of Gilbert et al. (US 2002/0072223).

Art Unit: 1765

Referring to claims 4, 9, 14, cleaning semiconductor with pure water is known to one skilled in the art in the process-manufacturing device as shown here by Gilbert in order to remove contamination on the wafer (paragraph [0045]).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

6. Claims 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. It is not clear where in the specification teaching of the nitrogen plasma step is carried out at a temperature of less than 100 degree C.

Response to Arguments

7. The Hashizume reference doesn't discuss about dry etching; however, he discusses the nitrogen-vacancy defects relate to plasma treated surface and one skilled in the art would know and recognize that nitrogen-vacancy defects would relate to dry etching because dry etching uses plasma.

Moustaka might not teach that the nitrogen vacancy is a results of dry etching. However, this problem is well recognized by one skilled in the art discussed above. Therefore, at the time of the invention, it is obvious that the nitrogen vacancies can be formed from dry etching. And

Art Unit: 1765

since Moustakas teaches method for reducing (or claimed recovering nitrogen vacancies) of the nitrogen vacancies one skilled in the art would find it obvious to apply Moustakas in order to reduce nitrogen vacancies, and therefore, the damage or problems associated or due to nitrogen vacancies would also be recovered.

Also, applying Moustakas technique to any process where this problem occurs would be obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention in order to solve the problem of nitrogen vacancies and the damage associated with the nitrogen vacancies.

Referring to applicant's arguments about the deficiencies of Moustakas, Lee and Gilbert, In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DuyVu n. Deo whose telephone number is 571-272-1462. The examiner can normally be reached on 6 am -2:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nadine Norton can be reached on 571-272-1465. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 1765

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Primary Examiner

Duy-Vu N Deo

5/1/06

